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Historic drama of winners,

The dust has settled.

Surely the time has come when we can figure out what President Ford's "Sunday Night Thud" really means.

Never, perhaps, since Richard Nixon's resignation, or possibly the Fairfax County supervisors' decision to ban smoking in high school rest rooms, has a public issue aroused such intense and contradictory commentary by the experts.

One expert says this; another expert says that. How is the poor newspaper reader or television watcher to know what or which is meaningful? Or relevant? Or laughable?

Well, the only way to straighten out the mess is to present all the comments in some sort of order, to give those who might be interested a kind of idea of how the President's decisions af-

fect each of the big names involved. Ready?

HENRY KISSINGER: He lost, according to some of the commentators. Kissinger lost his leadership of the National Security Council, and will thus lose his audience with the President nine times a week. On the other hand, according to other commentators, he won, because he is still secretary of state and sustains an audience with the President once a week, when, through sheer intellectual brilliance, he can make up for all the missed audiences. The question here is whether it is better to meet with the President once or nine times.

JAMES SCHLESINGER: Apparently a loser, it is possible that the ousted defense secretary will prove to have been a winner. He may turn out to be a board chairman of a defense contractor.

DONALD RUMSFELD: A winner on the face of it, but who can tell? Looking at the history of recent defense secretaries, like Louis Johnson and Robert McNamara, it's hard to see how he could benefit by his new assignment. On the other hand, remembering John Dean and John Ehrlichmann, it's hard to see how he could benefit from hanging on as a White House aide.

WILLIAM COLBY: Initially regarded as a loser, the CIA chief may turn out to be a big winner. His memoirs, whether written or merely threatened, could bring him security beyond the dreams of avarice. All it takes is that thin smile and that knowing look.

BRENT SCOWCROFT: Who?

ROGERS C.B. MORTON: A winner, no doubt about that. He gets out of

losers and sleepers

the whole crazy mess.

GEORGE BUSH: A loser. For a diplomat, he had possibly the softest soft job in the Foreign Service: an ambassadorship in a country where virtually no goofy Americans showed up to get into trouble. He will now be in charge of the Central Intelligence Agency, where goofy Americans get into trouble about three times a week.

ELLIOT RICHARDSON: A loser. Summoned back from London, where his top hat and his Harvard accent made him a winner, he will now become secretary of commerce, where these attributes will make him a loser.

ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT: A winner. The short-lived Cabinet nominee in the history of the Ford administration.

NELSON A. ROCKEFELLER: A winner. He, too, has severed his rela-

tionship to the Ford administration.

RIGHT-WING REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP: Losers. They lost Schlesinger as a symbol of hard-line anti-Communism, and Rockefeller as a symbol of righteousness.

LIBERAL REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP: Winners. They have so many grievances to be sore about, they'll be happy for years to come.

MEDIA OBSERVERS: Winners. Grist for God knows how many pontifications.

Now that the President has succeeded in stirring up so many of the important people in the country with his dynamic Sunday Night Massacre, he has only one small problem: How to interest the American public, which has been largely snoring through the whole thing.